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THE LIFE OF CERVANTES:

TOGETHER WITH

REMARKS

ON HIS

WRITINGS,

BY

Mr. DE FLORIAN.

Tranſlated from the *French*

BY

WILLIAM WALLBECK.

Quando ullum invenient parem? HORACE.

LEEDS:
Printed by J. BOWLING.
Sold by J. BEW, *Pater-Noſter-Row*; E. NEWBERRY, *Ludgate-Street*; H. PAYNE, *Pall-Mall*; J. DEBRETT, *Piccadilly*; and J. ROBSON, *New-Bond-Street*, LONDON.
Price ONE SHILLING.
M.DCC.LXXXV.

TO

Mrs. MATHEW.

MADAM,

I Beg leave herewith to present you,—not with a Romance, because it is not fiction,—but with the Life of CERVANTES DE SAAVEDRA; to whom such extraordinary adventures happened, that were they told us from less respectable authority than that of the Spanish Academy, we should hardly be brought to give them credit.

SAAVEDRA's captivity, and its concomitant events, as bordering on the marvellous, form that part of his History which will most excite the attention of the ordinary Reader: but you, Madam, who cannot peruse a page of his admirable "QUIXOTE," without enthusiastic rapture, you will be no less inquisitive about the minutest circumstances of the Author's domestic Life.

Nothing, indeed, but the fondness with which his memory is cherished by all lovers of Literature, could warrant my obtruding on the Public, a Work otherwise so insignificant: consisting only of a few pages, translated from a translation:—the shadow of a shade.

For although Mr. DE FLORIAN, the Translator out of the Spanish into French, has executed his task very ably, the knowing it to be but a version would deter almost any one of literary ambition from the yet humbler

task of turning that into English. And possibly I myself might have been discouraged from such an undertaking, had I not, upon my first meeting with his Book, chanced to compare it with the original; and, whether it was from my being so much more conversant with the French, than with the Spanish, or from Mr. DE FLORIAN's manner of writing, and his little additions, it appeared to me more lustrous as it came out of his hands. At that time, however, being abroad, I had no thought of translating it: and it was not till very lately, that, in relaxation of severer studies, which had brought upon me a fixed head-ache, I took to translating the agreeable Romance of "GALATEE;" to which the "LIFE OF CERVANTES," and the "REMARKS UPON HIS WRITINGS," stand prefixed.

Ere I had finished it, I happily got rid of my head-ache; and therefore dismissed my Doctor;—or, in parliamentary phrase, I threw "GALATEA" over the table: and if it is not absolutely kicked out of the House; it is a business adjourned *sine die*.

If it were not interrupting the course of your studies of greater pith and moment, I could almost venture to recommend to your perusal Mr. DE FLORIAN's "GALATEE." As it is the only pastoral Romance I ever read in my life, I cannot speak of its merit comparatively with that of others; but I think it excessively pretty: by no means perfect; for it partakes of the common fault of all of the Novel Genus,—too much *Love*. Of which, if I lament that there is so much to be found in books, it is only because there is so little to be found anywhere else.

Love, however, is not the sole subject of the Romance, but rural Manners;—pastoral Life, in general; of which, indeed, it may be said (for it is so in ARCADY, as well as

as upon the banks of the TAJO) *that* passion is the vital principle.

" *Landscapes only I mean to paint*; (says the Au-
" thor) *and village manners to describe. Ye, whose*
" *bosoms are fraught with sensibility, and whose minds*
" *are uncorrupt;—ye, who relish the pleasures of a*
" *country life;—to whom are grateful rural walks,*
" *and the contemplation of nature;—ye, of pure*
" *hearts, to whom the melody of birds, or murmur-*
" *ing streams speak peace; lend me your attention,*
" *all: and may ye reap instruction, as well as plea-*
" *sure.*"

The World is grown too populous, too luxurious, and too corrupt, I fear, ever to return to its primitive simplicity: and there are thousands, and thousands, in every Metropolis in Europe, whom nothing less than a plague could drive into the country; although they are morally sure, staying where they are, to lose their health, and, perhaps, their lives, in pursuit of fortunes or honours, which they never may obtain.

I have no very sanguine hope of awakening in such infatuated persons the dictates of reason and nature: yet I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing one particular passage, from Mr. DE FLORIAN, as a sort of abstract of rural happiness. I shall give it in his own words, which are elegantly simple, as befits the subject. It is the opening of the second book of "GALATEA."

" *Quand pourrai-je vivre au village! Quand se-*
" *rai-je le possesseur d'une petite maison entourée de*
" *cerisiers! Tout auprès seroient un jardin, un ver-*
" *ger, une prairie, et des ruches: un ruisseau bordé*
" *de noisettiers environneroit mon empire;—et mes*
" *desirs ne passeroient jamais ce ruisseau. Là, je*
" *coulerois*

THE
LIFE
OF
CERVANTES.

MICHAEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA, whoſe Writings have given celebrity to SPAIN, amuſed all EUROPE, and improved the age in which he lived,—himſelf dragged on a miſerable exiſtence,—and died ſcarcely regretted.

It is but very lately that the place of his birth has been aſcertained. MADRID, SEVILLE, LUCHEN, and ALCALA, have ſeverally laid claim to him.

CERVANTES, as well as HOMER, CAMOENS, and other illuſtrious men, has, ſince his death, been held in the higheſt eſtimation, though he lived almoſt in want of common neceſſaries.

The SPANISH ACADEMY, under the patronage of the KING, has at length thought proper to pay—to the *memory* of CERVANTES—thoſe honours which were ſo juſtly *his* due. An Edition of 'DON QUIXOTE,' of unparalleled typographical ſplendour, has been newly publiſhed. The EDITORS, having their national honour at heart, ſeem, by the extraordinary care, and expence beſtowed upon *the Work*, deſirous to atone for the ſtupid, and almoſt criminal neglect of *the Author*.

Materials for CERVANTES's Life have been

been very ſedulouſly collected, and wrought up by a diſtinguiſhed Member of the ACADEMY: from which it appears, he was of a Gentleman's family; being Son of RODERICK DE CERVANTES, and LEONORA DE CORTINAS. He was born at ALCALA DE HENARES, a town in NEW CASTILE, the 9th day of October, 1547, in the reign of CHARLES THE FIFTH.

From his earlieſt infancy he was fond of books. He ſtudied at MADRID, under a very eminent Profeſſor: and ſoon diſtinguiſhed himſelf from the reſt of his School-fellows, by his ſuperior genius.

A proficiency in the Latin language, and an inſight into Theology, made up the learning of thoſe days. His Parents intended him either for Phy-

ſic, or the Church; thoſe two being the only lucrative profeſſions then followed in SPAIN: But, CERVANTES had this in common with many celebrated Poets,—he made verſes in ſpite of his Parents.

AN ELEGY on the death of QUEEN ISABELLA of VALOIS,—ſeveral SONNETS,—and a POEM entitled FILENA, were his firſt productions. The indifferent reception theſe met with, ſeemed to our young Author ſuch flagrant injuſtice, that he thereupon took the reſolution of quitting his native Country; and went to ſettle at ROME. There penury conſtrained him to enter into the ſervice of CARDINAL AQUAVIVA, in the humble capacity of *Valet de Chambre.*

Diſguſted very ſoon with an employ

ſo

ſo little ſuited to the ardor of his diſpoſition, he quitted it, to enliſt for a Soldier: and diſtinguiſhed himſelf for his bravery at the famed Battle of LEPANTO, won by DON JUAN of AUSTRIA. It was there he received a muſket-ſhot in his left hand, which deprived him for ever of the uſe of it. The only recompenſe he got for his maimed limb, and the diſplay of extraordinary perſonal valour, was, the being ſent, along with his wounded fellows, to the Hoſpital at MESSINA.

Little as he had reaped by his firſt campaign, the trade of a Soldier, with all its ills, ſeemed to CERVANTES preferable to that of a neglected Poet. As ſoon as he was well of his wounds, he enliſted anew: and ſerved three years in Garriſon at NAPLES.

As

As he was returning, after that, to his own Country, aboard a veſſel belonging to his Sovereign, PHILIP THE SECOND, he was captured by MAMI, the moſt formidable Pirate of thoſe times; and was carried to ALGIERS.

Though Fortune ſeemed to perſecute CERVANTES with her utmoſt malice, ſhe could not break his enterpriſing ſpirit. Become a Slave,—and that to a cruel Maſter;—almoſt certain of being put to the torture,—and not improbably—to death,—if he made any attempt to gain his liberty,—he had the hardineſs to concert, with fourteen other captive SPANIARDS, upon the means of Eſcape.

The plan agreed upon was this. One of them was to be redeemed at

their general expence; was to go ſtraight to SPAIN; and procure a Veſſel, to return in, as ſoon as poſſible, to ALGIERS; and carry off, under favour of night, his captive countrymen.

To put ſuch a ſcheme in execution was no very eaſy matter. In the firſt place, they had to ſcrape together a ſum of money ſufficient to ranſome the Adventurer: and then, they had to effect their eſcape from their reſpective Maſters: to find out a convenient place for a rendezvous; where they could remain concealed until the day of their liberated Fellow's return: nor was it to be ſuppoſed but *he* would have many difficulties to encounter with, on his part.

In

In ſhort, the obſtacles were ſo many, and great, that it was next to an impoſſibility to effect their purpoſe. But,—what will not the love of liberty incite us to?

One of the SPANIARDS happening to ſerve in the capacity of a Gardiner, was of moſt eſſential uſe; for, having to cultivate a very extenſive piece of ground, which lay along the Sea-ſhore, he undertook to dig, in a part of it little frequented, a Cavern, large enough to contain them all. As he could only work at it by ſtealth, it took him up no leſs than two years to complete it.

In the mean time, what with the money they collected by alms, and what they earned by dint of labour,

bour,* they had amaſſed a ſum ſufficient to ranſome one VIANO, a MAJORCAN; whom they pitched upon, for the arduous undertaking, as well on account of his intimate knowledge of the Coaſt of BARBARY, as for the

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* *Soit par des aumones, ſoit à force de travail.* From theſe words of Mr. DE FLORIAN's, (for I profeſs to tranſlate from the *French*, for want of a competent knowledge of the *Spaniſh*,) it appears that the Slaves not only partook of charitable donations, but received ſomething like wages; or, more probably, what with the ROMANS was diſtinguiſhed by the name of "*Peculium*:"—That is, the Slaves, having completed the taſks ſeverally aſſigned them by their Maſters, were at liberty to work for themſelves: and whatever they earned by ſuch extra labour was their own ſeparate, and *peculiar* gain.

The treatment, then, which captive Chriſtians experience at the hands of the MAHOMETANS, is leſs cruel than is commonly imagined; varying, no doubt, according to the willingneſs of the Slave, on the one hand, and to the diſpoſition of the Maſter, on the other. Many of the MOORS are, queſtionleſs, of a benign and merciful nature; though ſome there may be as unfeeling as thoſe of our WEST-INDIA Planters, who affect to conſider their Slaves in the light only of Ourang-outtangs.

implicit confidence which they all repoſed in him.

Although the redemption-money was ready, and the Cavern completed, ſix other months elapſed before all the Captives found means to effect their eſcape. At length, however, they were aſſembled: VIANO was ranſomed; and parted. Firſt ſolemnly pledging himſelf to uſe all poſſible diſpatch in procuring a veſſel; and to return, and liberate his Countrymen.

As CERVANTES had all along been the ſoul of the undertaking, his ardour in no wiſe abated now. He took upon himſelf the greateſt trouble, and ran the greateſt riſk. Every night, as ſoon as it was dark, he ventured out, to purchaſe proviſions; taking

taking care always to be back before break of day.

The Gardener was the only one of the confederated Slaves that had not eloped; and for the very obvious reaſon, that he could beſt ſerve the common intereſt by remaining as he was. The appointment of any other to his place, would, in all probability, have led to a diſcovery of the Cave. So long as he continued in place, he might be conſidered as a Sentinel on duty in a Watch Tower, from whence to give alarm to the little Garriſon, in caſe of any Enemy's approach; or, which was of equal importance, to appriſe them of the coming of auxiliary troops. In other words, from the nature of his employ, and his ſituation, he was beſt enabled

to regulate their movements: and at the ſame time, he could keep a conſtant look-out for the anxiouſly-expected *Majorcan*.

VIANO kept his word. He had no ſooner arrived at MAJORCA, than he waited on the *Viceroy*: made him acquainted with his countrymen's ſituation; and demanded (as it was a national concern) his aſſiſtance. The *Viceroy* forthwith furniſhed him with a ſloop; and VIANO joyfully ſet ſail for the Coaſt of BARBARY.

He arrived at ALGIERS on the 28th day of September, 1577; exactly one month from the day he quitted it. He had taken ſuch very accurate note of the Quarter where the Garden was ſituated, that, he contrived, as had been concerted, to ſtand in for it at the cloſe of day. The

The Gardener who had ſometime perceived the veſſel making for land, flattered himſelf that it *might* poſſibly be VIANO's. He kept his eyes fixed ſtedfaſtly upon it: his mind, the while, ſuſpended betwixt anxious hope, and fearful diſappointment. But, when the veſſel drew in ſo near that he could deſcry the agreed-on ſignal flying at the maſt-head, how extravagant was his joy! He haſtened to his fellows, to communicate the felicitous tidings.

Delicious moment! What a tranſition from deſpondency to joy! The care-worn wretches have already forgot their ſufferings. They congratulate, they embrace each other; they ſhed even tears of joy: and in wild, tumultuous ecſtacy, hurry headlong out of their cavern.

It

It is even ſo;—the Gardener has *not* deceived them:—It *is*;—it *can* be no other than VIANO's bark. And, look! the very ſignal. Nearer,—and yet a little nearer,—and they deſcry VIANO himſelf ſtanding at the helm. With what emotion they behold him; they upliſt their hands, and with one general voice, hail him their "Deliverer."

Now, the veſſel's keel is ploughing up the ſhore; and the Mariners are letting down a ladder to facilitate their embarkation;—when,—ah! ſad chance! a party of MOORS, at the very inſtant appear, and ſeeing ſo many Chriſtians aſſembled about a bark, give the alarm, ſhouting "To arms;—to arms." VIANO put to ſea again; and his miſerable compatriots fled

back

back with precipitation to their hiding-place; there to bewail their cruel disappointment.

CERVANTES did every thing in his power to cheer his drooping companions. He bade them hope VIANO would return; for so he either really thought, or affected to think.—But, VIANO was never more heard of.

As their minds grew more and more despondent, their bodies kept pace in sufferance. From the dampness of their subterraneous habitation, and for want of air and exercise, the major part of them fell dangerously ill. So long as CERVANTES had strength sufficient left, he ministered to their wants; procured them proper aliment; tended upon, and comforted them: but, at length, falling

sick

ſick himſelf, he was obliged to have recourſe to others. He inſtructed one of his companions, who was yet well, where he was to go, and how he was to conduct himſelf, in order to procure proviſions.

As if the meaſure of their griefs was not yet full, this man, on whom their ſecurity, and very exiſtence depended, proved a traitor. He went ſtraight to AZAN, the King, and made diſcovery of the whole.— And having, the better to ſecure his pardon, turned Mahometan, the infamous wretch unheſitatingly conducted a party of Soldiers to the ſpot where his Countrymen lay concealed.

The wretched SPANIARDS were immediately ſeized, and put in irons; and carried to the palace, to receive ſen-

tence. When they came into the King's preſence, he promiſed them pardon, if they would diſcover their Ringleader.—" That am *I*— (ex-" claimed CERVANTES;)—ſave my " innocent Companions,—and lead " *me* to death."—The King, ſtruck with his magnanimity, remitted him his crime; and delivered him to his Maſter MAMI, with ſtrict injunctions not to inflict puniſhment on ſo brave a fellow. The reſt too were pardoned, except the poor Gardener, who was executed upon the ſpot.

CERVANTES, hardly dealt with by fortune;—betrayed by a Countryman, his friend too and companion,—one like himſelf, in miſery;—and reduced again to the condition of a Slave;—inſtead of giving way to deſpondency,

did but ſo much the more impatiently ſtrive to regain his liberty. Four ſeveral times he attempted it; but ſtill without ſucceſs. His laſt ſcheme was worthy of a daring mind; it was no leſs than to cauſe a general revolt of the Slaves, of whatſoever nation; to overpower the Barbarians, and make himſelf Maſter of the City.*

The

* Almoſt all the Editors of "DON QUIXOTE" have conſidered the Story of "THE CAPTIVE," interwoven in that Work, as immediately relating to CERVANTES himſelf. That one particular part of it does, there can be no doubt, becauſe he makes mention of the name of SAAVEDRA; (as will preſently be ſeen, cited in theſe Memoirs.) There are alſo certain other portions of it, which, though blended probably with fiction, ſeem deduced from circumſtances incidental to himſelf. The very paſſage, for inſtance, to which this note has reference, appears to be copied from that very Hiſtory. I quote from Mr. JARVIS's Tranſlation; and in his own words.

"*I had tried a thouſand ways of making my eſcape;*
"*but none rightly timed, nor ſucceſsful.—I purpoſed*
"*to try other means of compaſſing what I deſired:*
"*for,*

The Conſpiracy was diſcovered, and CERVANTES, though known to be the author of it, again eſcaped puniſhment. So true is it, that undaunted courage forces reſpect even from our Enemies.

It is probable CERVANTES meant to ſpeak of himſelf, when, in the Story of "THE SLAVE," (one of the moſt intereſting Epiſodes in "DON "QUIXOTE,") he ſays—"*The cruel*† "AZAN;

"*for, the hope of recovering my liberty never entirely* "*abandoned me: and whenever what I had con-* "*trived, did not anſwer my deſign, I preſently, with-* "*out deſponding, formed to myſelf freſh hope to ſuſ-* "*tain me, though ever ſo ſlight, and inconſiderable.*"

† The epithet "*cruel*," however it may correſpond with the general character of AZAN, is improperly foiſted in here. For, certainly, from all we learn of his treatment of CERVANTES, (as mentioned in theſe Memoirs;) ſo far from deſerving to be branded with cruelty, he might paſs for a Prince humane, even to a weakneſs.

Exiſts

"AZAN, *King of* ALGIERS, *never* "*showed any mercy except to one* SAA-"VEDRA, *a Spanish Soldier; who often* "*times, at hazard of his life, formed* "*enterprises of so daring a nature, that* "*the Infidels are not likely soon to forget* "*them.*"

Though AZAN spared CERVANTES's life, he did not choose to trust so formidable a Captive in other hands than his own; and therefore purchased him of his Master MAMI; and caused him to be watched very narrowly.

Not long after he was in his possession, the King was obliged to go to

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Exists there, at this day, a Potentate upon earth, who would pardon such atrocious crimes? Even in BRITAIN itself, should any one cause an insurrection, and endeavour to make himself Master of the Metropolis, he must have good friends, and good lawyers, and good luck too—to escape hanging.

CON-

CONSTANTINOPLE, but was willing to be rid first of a person whom he considered in so dangerous a light; he therefore gave intimation to CERVANTES's Relations of his captive state; in order that they might, if they thought proper, redeem him.

CERVANTES's Mother, who was still living, a Widow, and very poor, disposed of what few valuables she had; and hastened with the product, about three hundred ducats of silver, to the TRINITY FATHERS, at MADRID; whose particular business it was to negotiate for the ransome of Spanish Captives. This sum, though the Widow's All, was not deemed adequate. The King insisted upon five hundred golden crowns. The *holy* Fa-

Fathers,—for ſuch, in this inſtance, they may be truly called,—compaſſionating the Widow's diſtreſs, made up, with their own money, the ſum required: and CERVANTES was redeemed on the 19th of September, 1580; after a captivity of five years.

Upon his return to his native land, CERVANTES, out of love with a military life, reſolved to devote himſelf to Letters. He ſettled in lodgings with his Mother; and indulged the pleaſing hope, that by his labours he ſhould be able to procure her a comfortable ſubſiſtence.

He was then three and thirty years of age. His firſt Publication was "GALATEA;" of which he gave only ſix Books; but never finiſhed it;

it;* although it met with a tolerable reception.

This ſame year CERVANTES married DONNA CATHERINE DE PELACIOS; a Lady of good family; and doubtleſs of great perſonal merit,—for he had no fortune with her. To ſupport his family he took to writing for the Stage; and, he aſſures us, with very good ſucceſs. Nevertheleſs, he ſoon quitted his theatrical concerns for an employ obtained at SEVILLE, where he went to reſide. It was there he

* Mr. DE FLORIAN has completed it; and in a very maſterly, and correſpondent ſtile.

The Editor of this Life has, too, tranſlated, (from the French of Mr. DE FLORIAN,) all the Poetry (which is no inconſiderable part) of "GALATEA," and much of the Proſe: and, if the Public think well of this ſpecimen of his labours, he ſhall hold it his duty, at ſome future period, to reſume a Work, which his literary capriciouſneſs has at preſent laid aſide.

wrote

wrote his "NOVELS," in which he has so well portrayed the manners and vices of that great City.

CERVANTES was in his fiftieth year, when business called him to LA MANCHA. The inhabitants of an inconsiderable Village, called ARGAMAZILLA, upon some frivolous pretext quarrelled with him; and dragged him to prison: where he was a considerable time confined. It was in that very prison he began his incomparable "DON QUIXOTE." He thought to revenge himself for the ill treatment he met with, by laying the first scenes of his Hero's extravagances in that neighbourhood:* though he for-

* 'Il crut se venger de ceux qui l'insultoient, en faisant de leur pays la patrie de son Heros.'—One would almost

forbore mentioning the name of that particular village, throughout the whole romance.*

almost be apt, then, to suspect, that SAAVEDRA, at the outset of his Work, proposed to himself to make his Hero a more ridiculous, and less amiable personage. And the first lines perhaps might have born so striking a resemblance to some one at ARGAMAZILLA, that if he had identified the Village, he would have subjected himself thereby to fresh persecution, if not to prosecution.

The opening of the History has this remarkable expression: '*In a Village of* LA MANCHA, *the name of* '*which I* purposely *omit.*' These words, having a covert sense, warrant almost any construction.

If it really was the case, that SAAVEDRA began his History of "DON QUIXOTE," from personal pique; and meant to cauterize some offending individual, his admirers have reason to rejoice that he departed from such his first intention. The larger field which he has taken, has happily given scope to his talents; and raised his Work, from the insignificancy of lampoon, to the dignity of satire.

* '*Il affecta cependant de ne pas nommer une seule fois dans son roman le village où on l'avoit si mal traité.*' Whatever were the outlines, whether likeness, or caricature, which SAAVEDRA first sketched in his own mind;

He began with publiſhing only the "FIRST PART" of "DON QUIXOTE;" which not meeting with its deſerved

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mind; it is certain that the portrait he has given to the world, is not more admirable for its colours, and high finiſhing, than it is for its fair proportions. The characteriſtic excellencies of QUIXOTE are Valour blended with Humanity, Morality grafted on Religion, Learning ſet off by Elocution, together with a ſociability of temper, which rendered him truly delectable; as well on account of the variety, and gracefulneſs of his converſation, as for the courteſy and elegance of his manners. His very failings, (if by ſo harſh a name we ſhould chooſe to diſtinguiſh the ebullitions of Philanthrophy,) rendered him but more amiable. Even when his too ardent and generous feelings betray him into ridiculous exceſſes,—and we are tempted to laugh at him, it is impoſſible to withhold from him our love, and pity.—But,—this is not a proper place for an eulogy on my favourite DON. It is ſufficient for my purpoſe here to obſerve, that CERVANTES has inveſted his Hero with ſuch honourable enſigns, and adorned him with ſo many virtues, that the firſt City in the World would be proud to own him. It was not to be imagined, then, that ARGAMAZILLA would have the honour of his birth: or that CERVANTES would condeſcend even to mention in his Work, (the fame of which he was conſcious would endure to the end of time,) ſuch a paltry, inſignificant village; and which, for the indignant treatment he there received, if it merited his notice at all, it would have been—to brand it with infamy.

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ſucceſs, CERVANTES, who knew thoroughly the diſpoſition of mankind, immediately wrote a little Piece, which he entitled "THE SERPENT." This pamphlet, which is no where to be met with now, (not even in SPAIN,) ſeemed, on the face of it, to be a criticiſm on "DON QUIXOTE," but was in effect a cutting ſatire upon the Blockheads who detracted from the merit of that excellent Work. Every body read the ſatire; and "DON QUIXOTE" thereby gained a reputation, which its own intrinſic merit ought rather to have procured it.

Hereupon all the witlings in SPAIN combined againſt the Author. Though living themſelves in a ſtate of warfare, and hatred one of another; they were not ſo occupied but

they could obſerve the haſty ſtrides which our literary Giant was making, towards the Temple of Fame; and they were ſenſible that, he having once gained admiſſion, the doors would be ſhut againſt them for ever. For this reaſon, they agreed for the preſent to lay aſide their animoſities; and not only patched up a truce amongſt themſelves, but entered into a league againſt their formidable Rival. Againſt him they drew up all their forces; againſt him pointed their envenomed ſhafts, and directed all their artillery. But not in the way of honeſt, open enemies; not by boldly facing him in the field, but by harraſſing him on his march. They attacked him, not as Grammarians, and Philologiſts, but as Quibblers, Cavillers; not with arguments, but

insults: nor blushed they even to add the grossest calumny to the most malicious criticism. In fine, CERVANTES's growing fame proved more fatal to him than the neglect he had formerly experienced.

Whether from the tyranny of the Kings of SPAIN, or her Sub-tyrants the Priests, (be it remembered that it is still an Absolute Monarchy, and the Inquisition subsists in full force)—that Nation has been justly reproached with being very far behind the rest of Europe in Learning. At the time, in particular, in which CERVANTES lived, men of real knowledge and sound judgement were very rare. So few indeed were they who had taste enough to relish the humour, or discern the beauties of his writing, that,

that, overawed by the hoſt of ſcribblers in combination againſt him, he durſt not for many years put any thing to preſs. His means of ſupport thus cut off, he fell into extreme indigence.

Happily for him, the COUNT DE LEMOS and the CARDINAL of TOLEDO, were not inſenſible of his worth, and occaſionally relieved him. Their patronage and bounty, which CERVANTES's grateful nature infinitely magnified, were continued to him to his death: but were neither proportioned to their rank and ability, nor to his penury and merit.

CERVANTES eagerly embraced the firſt occaſion which preſented of teſtifying his ſenſe of the Count's favours, by dedicating to him his "NOVELS;"

a work which made its appearance about eight years after the "FIRST "PART" of "DON QUIXOTE." The year following he publiſhed his "JOURNEY TO PARNASSUS." Neither of theſe productions turned to much profit: and the COUNT's pecuniary aſſiſtance was ſo very trifling, that to keep his family from ſtarving he was conſtrained to publiſh "EIGHT "PLAYS," which had been refuſed at the Theatre.

It was CERVANTES's hard lot to ſuffer great humiliation, as well as great miſery. An Arragonian, who called himſelf AVELLANEDA, had the impudence to publiſh, during our Author's life, "A CONTINUATION" of "DON QUIXOTE." A moſt wretched performance it was ſaid to be;

be; wholly devoid of wit, ſpirit, or taſte:—but it abounded in ſcurrility, and perſonal abuſe of poor CERVANTES. This circumſtance alone, which ought to have rendered AVELLANEDA and his work together odious, brought them both into repute.

Our Author anſwered this unmerited abuſe,—as all abuſe is beſt anſwered,—by taking no manner of notice of it: but contented himſelf with publiſhing "A SECOND PART" of "DON QUIXOTE," more excellent, if poſſible, than the "FIRST."

Every one was now convinced of CERVANTES's ſuperiour talents; and yet,—(how unjuſt mankind are!)—the more reaſon they had to be ſatiſfied with our Author's worth, the leſs they ſeemed diſpoſed to paſs cenſure on

on his execrable rival. SPAIN is not the only country in the world where malice is let loose to hunt down real merit, and detraction is taken into favour.* As long as CERVANTES lived AVELLANEDA was talked of:—as soon as he was dead, AVELLANEDA was forgotten.

The "SECOND PART" of "DON QUIXOTE" was the last of our Author's Writings published in his life time. He was at work upon his "PERSILES AND SIGISMONDA," when

* 'L'ESPAGNE *n' est peutêtre pas le seul pays du 'monde où la malignité, si severe pour les bons ouv-'rages, est toujours indulgente pour leurs détracteurs.'* This remark, which is evidently Mr. DE FLORIAN's, seems to breathe the resentment of an Author smarting under the lash of illiberal criticism: yet I never heard that Mr. F. had published any thing previous to this Life of SAAVEDRA. Or, if he had, one would have thought a Writer so generally correct could not have provoked the spleen of any one worthy his resentment.

he was attacked by a dropſy, of which he died. As he was ſenſible how ſmall was his chance of cure, he grew very anxious to complete the Work, and by too conſtant application aggravated his diſorder, and thereby accelerated his death.

As CERVANTES, his whole life through had born up manfully againſt the heavieſt preſſure of misfortunes, his fortitude did not at the laſt forſake him. Four days only before he died he ordered his romance, "PERSILES," to be brought him; and in his then weak ſtate, and with a feeble hand, traced out the Epiſtle dedicatory to the COUNT DE LEMOS. This Dedication is too remarkable to ſtand in need of apology for inſerting it here.

TO

TO

DON PEDRO FERNANDES DE CASTRO,

COUNT of LEMOS, &c. &c.

WE *have an old Spanish Romance, the beginning of which is but too applicable to my present condition,—*

" *Death has fast hold of me, yet I*
" *Would write to you before I die.*"

This is exactly my case. Yesterday I received extreme unction; to-day I am at the point of death: and am sorry that I cannot therefore properly express to you my congratulations upon your safe return to SPAIN. *The pleasure that gives me*

*might, one would think, be the means of ſaving my life;—but,—*God's *will be done.*

Your Excellency *will know at leaſt that my gratitude has laſted as long as has my life.*

I regret that it is not in my power to finiſh certain of my works which were intended to be dedicated to your Lordſhip, viz. "The Garden Calendar";—"The Great Bernard;"*—*and the*

"Last

* What ſort of a Work the "Garden Calendar" was, its title explains: but, I confeſs, I am at a loſs to gueſs what Saavedra means by "The Great Bernard;" and the more ſo becauſe Mr. De Florian has not thought proper to canonize it. I ſuſpect, however, that it refers to that well-known Mountain, called "The Great *Saint* Bernard," on the confines of Switzerland and Piedmont; which is upwards of 6000 feet, perpendicular height, above the Leman-Lake, and is covered with eternal Snow. If Saavedra ever viſited this Mountain, or beheld only from a diſtance its towering ſummit, well might he deem it worthy celebration. If

"LAST PART" *of* "GALATEA," *for which I know you have a sort of partiality. But, to accomplish all this, I had need beg of* THE ALMIGHTY *to work a miracle in* my *favour; whereas my most earnest prayer is,—that He will keep* YOUR EXCELLENCY *in his especial care.*

Michael De Cervantes.

MADRID, 19*th April*, 1616.

The 23d of the same month he died; aged sixty-eight years, six months, and some days.

If I am wrong in this conjectural elucidation, which I propose with great diffidence, I shall think myself particularly obliged to any body who will be at the pains of setting me right, through the channel of the Reviews, Gentleman's Magazine, or any other respectable periodical Work. Possibly the Spanish Edition of CERVANTES's Life, which I have no opportunity of consulting, may of itself be sufficiently clear.

He—

He—who could manifeſt upon ſo many trying occaſions ſuch ſpirit, and intrepidity;—could comport himſelf, when a Captive, as CERVANTES did;—could write ſuch a Book as "DON QUIXOTE;" and in a priſon too:—and could pen ſuch a Dedication, on his death-bed;—was certainly a man above the ordinary ſtamp.

REMARKS

ON THE WRITINGS OF CERVANTES;

BY

Mr. DE FLORIAN.

THE "POEMS" which CERVANTES publiſhed early in life, have not attained to fame: nor, in truth, do they deſerve it. His "SONNETS" and "ELEGIES" are too ſtrongly tinctured with the falſe wit, and forced conceits of his time.

His beſt performance, and that which has given him renown, is "DON QUIXOTE." The ſound ſenſe, the

the pleaſantry, and rich vein of irony which runs through the whole; its truth of character, correctneſs, and ſimplicity of ſtile, have rendered it immortal.

I know, nevertheleſs, that there are perſons, who, from not being able to read it in *Spaniſh*, think leſs highly of it, than it merits: which, is to be aſcribed, rather to the defects of the tranſlation, than to any faults in the original.

Not but the work itſelf is now and then tedious; and ſome inſtances, though very few, might be produced, of the Author's bad taſte. Such, however, it is in a Tranſlator's power, as it is his duty, to alter, or retrench; without fear of the imputation of infidelity. Whoever undertakes to

tranſ-

tranſlate a work of humour, may be ſure, that the more pleaſant, ſprightly and agreeable he can render his own verſion, the more acceptable it will prove.*

* I have taken the liberty to conſtruct this ſentence ſomewhat differently from Mr. DE FLORIAN. His words are, ' *La traduction la plus agréable eſt à coup ſur la plus* fidele.'—' The more agreeable a tranſlation ' is the more *exact* it muſt be accounted.'—Which, literally taken, is not true.

A Tranſlator but indifferently qualified for his taſk, will adhere with ſcrupulous exactneſs to the very *words* of the original:—*Verbum verbo curabit reddere*:—and his verſion would be as much more exact, as it would be leſs agreeable, than that of a perſon of genius, and ſtrong conception; who, ſolicitous only to transfuſe the *ſpirit* of his Author, would ſometimes contract, ſometimes dilate the ſenſe; not only the better to adapt it to the idiom of the language, but to the peculiar humour of his countrymen.

CICERO, ſpeaking of the orations which he had tranſlated from the Greek, ſays,—' *Nec converti, ut interpres, ſed ut orator, ſententiis iiſdem et earum formis, tanquam figuris, verbis ad noſtram conſuetudinem aptis.*'

Mr.

Notwithſtanding the faults of the Tranſlation, which tend to weaken the force of the wit and ſatire, of the Original, ſo great is its intrinſic merit, that we ſtill hold the work in the higheſt eſtimation. CERVANTES has had the addreſs to render the Epiſodes themſelves intereſting; and the main Hiſtory is told with ſuch infinite humour, and the Characters put into ſuch a variety of laughable ſituations, that our very hangings, as well as our pictures and prints, recount the Adventures of QUIXOTE; and our children recogniſe, and laugh at SANCHO PANCA.

Our Author's "NOVELS" are very

Mr. DE FLORIAN's meaning, I take to be this: In tranſlating a book profeſſedly humorous, he, who has the addreſs to make his own verſion a work of humour, fully anſwers the intention of the original.

inferiour

inferiour to his "DON QUIXOTE." There are twelve of them; but only four deſerve to be called CERVANTES's, viz.—"THE CURIOUS IMPERTINENT;" which he has inſerted in his "QUIXOTE:"—"RINCONET AND CORTADILLA;" a ludicrous, but correct account of the Sharpers of SEVILLE:—"THE TIES OF CONSANGUINITY," which is the beſt wrought, and moſt intereſting of any of them:—and "The DIALOGUE betwixt TWO DOGS." This laſt is an admirable piece of Criticiſm; not leſs lively, than philoſophical. The manners of his Countrymen are deſcribed in it with great wit and preciſion.

The "JOURNEY TO PARNASSUS," is a Poem, in ſeveral cantos. The Author feigns, that, PARNASSUS being

ing beſieged by legions of bad Poets, APOLLO ſends MERCURY into SPAIN, to call in the aid of his favourite Allies. MERCURY comes to CERVANTES, and ſhows him the liſt, as well of thoſe ſummoned to his aſſiſtance, as of the Beſiegers. No ſubject could be more happily imagined by a Man of Talents, who ſought an occaſion to exerciſe his wit upon certain Blockheads, who had provoked him. This work nevertheleſs is not very pleaſant in itſelf; and not at all intereſting to us.

There are eight of CERVANTES's "COMEDIES" yet extant. In the Preface to them he obſerves, he had written twenty, *or* thirty. To thoſe, who know how much labour goes to the writing of a ſingle Play only, it will

will appear extraordinary that an Author ſhould not be able to aſcertain the exact number.

Whether the number of Plays CERVANTES wrote was twenty *or* thirty, is immaterial; for to judge of thoſe which are loſt by thoſe which remain, we have no cauſe of regret. I have read through the eight he publiſhed with great attention; and not one of them is ſo much as tolerable. The ground plots are neither intereſting in themſelves, nor well wrought. We meet frequently with flaſhes of wit, but never with veriſimilitude. Such are their general characteriſtics.

In the one which is intitled "THE FORTUNATE LECHER," the Hero, in the firſt act, is the greateſt Raſcal in

all

all SEVILLE; in the ſecond he is a Jacobine Monk, at MEXICO; and is a pattern of piety. He has frequent conteſts with the Devil, upon the ſtage; and always comes off victorious. Called in to pray by a woman at the point of death; one who had led a very profligate life; Father CRUX (for ſo he is called) exhorts her to confeſs; which ſhe, deſpairing of pardon, refuſes to do. The zealous Confeſſor, to ſave her from conſequent impenitency, propoſes to make an exchange with her,—his Merits againſt her Sins. The bargain is ſtruck; and a contract ſigned in due form. The woman confeſſes, and expires: Angels appear to take away her ſoul; and the Devil comes to lay in his claim to the Monk: who, to his aſtoniſhment, finds himſelf grown

all

all over leprous. In the third act, he dies, and performs miracles.*

Such is the plot of a Play written by the Author of "DON QUIXOTE:" and perhaps the beſt Play he ever wrote.†

There

* If Mr. DE FLORIAN had been a good Catholic, he would have *noted* the manifeſt impropriety of giving the power of performing miracles to a Perſon turned over to the Devil.

† What an eccentric genius SAAVEDRA's was! Who would think it poſſible that the compoſer of ſo fine a dramatic Story, as "DON QUIXOTE," could ſo deviate from all manner of beauty and order; and pen ſo execrable a farce! If it had not been publiſhed by himſelf, there is but one circumſtance by which we could have gueſſed it to have been his: that is, the boldneſs with which he has lifted his ſatiric hand againſt the all-ſufficient Clergy. Not, probably, that it was done in ſo direct, and unqualified a manner, as theſe outlines of the Comedy might lead us to ſuppoſe; but, by covert ſatire; by irony, if not finely imagined, at leaſt ſo happily expreſſed, that it would bear the conſtruction of obſequiouſneſs, or even adulation. The Spies, elſe, of that infernal tribunal, called the *Holy* Inquiſition, would certainly have reported SAAVEDRA. And yet, how groſs muſt have been the ignorance, how rank the ſtupidity of

thoſe

There are alſo extant eight "INTERLUDES," written by CERVANTES; and which are far preferable to his "PLAYS." They are natural and unforced in their plots; and humorous in their Dialogue. Some of them rather border on licentiouſneſs; but, two of them are every way charming: "THE CAVE of SALAMANCA;" and "THE MOCK PRODIGY." "PER-

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thoſe times not to have detected the burleſque of ſuch a repreſentation!

Taking the Comedy in one ſenſe, or rather one word of it, in (I fear) its only ſenſe, literal or figurative, I wiſh that CERVANTES had not been jeſting; but had written it in good and ſober earneſt. The word which I advert to is "CRUX;" which he has caſually taken, for the Confeſſor's name. I do not affect to be over-righteous, (GOD—alas!—knows, how very, very far I am from that,) but I cannot, and who, that has the leaſt ſenſe of Religion can, bear to ſee "the Croſs,"—that precious memorial of our redemption, applied as a fit name for a ludicrous character.

I marvel much how that word ſlipped from SAAVEDRA's

"PERSILES AND SIGISMUNDA," is a long, tedious Romance, over-charged with Episodes, and marvellous Adventures. One would think, CERVANTES intended it as an imitation of the old, Greek Romances; which were once in very high estimation; and are not without their admirers now: but not even our Author's brilliant imagination could render such a Work interesting. The Personages being

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DRA's pen; unless through careless haste. From his head, or heart, assuredly it never came: for, if ever Writer of a work of humour took pains to inculcate Religion, it was the Author of "DON QUIXOTE." There is not a Chapter in the Book that does not abound in religious and moral precepts. And the Hero of the Romance, whatever other extravagancies he is guilty of, never forgets his GOD. Acquitting SAAVEDRA, which I certainly do, of any intention of blasphemy, I would not have fixed the Reader's attention upon it, but by way of hint to Writers in general, to be exceedingly cautious in the use of words, the injudicious application of which, may, centuries after their death, bring their religious character in question.

for ever ſcampering about, and to no end; their frequent hair-breadth e-ſcapes; and what more than all the reſt, has contributed to impede its fame, is its very unnatural jumble of Religion and Love. In ſpite of all theſe faults, the language itſelf is ſo good; the drawings in ſome parts of it ſo correct; and the one particular Epiſode of "RUPERT" ſo entertaining, that, upon the whole, it may be ſaid to be a Work of merit!

The laſt of his Works I have to ſpeak of is "GALATEA." At the time CERVANTES wrote it, SPAIN was the nation of the world the moſt gallant. Love was the ſole occupation of the Spaniards, the ſubject of all their Books.

MON-

MONTEMAYOR, a celebrated Poet, had juſt before publiſhed his "DIANA;" a Romance which met with great ſucceſs: and deſervedly too; for it is written in very elegant language; and has both wit, and delicacy of ſentiment. The poetry is abſolutely enchanting. All which, together with the particularly affecting ſimplicity of the Story of "ABINDARRAES, THE MOOR," more than compenſate for the improbabilities, the magic, and the want of action; faults with which the "DIANA" ſtands juſtly charged.*

* It ſeems odd that a Work, which is objected to for the inſertion of ſupernatural agency, of *magic*, as well as of the *marvellous*,—ſhould at the ſame time be chargeable with the default of action. An Author indulging himſelf in the uſe of ſuch machinery, muſt manage it very aukwardly not to make at leaſt a buſtle with it, though it ſhould have no other good effect.

CERVANTES, who was very well apprized of these defects, (as appears by the examination of the Books in the DON's library,) avoided some of them, in his "GALATEA," but not all. His characters are more interesting, and the incidents less unnatural: but in point of style, more particularly in his verse, he is very inferiour to MONTEMAYOR.

Infected with the scholastic jargon then prevalent, CERVANTES makes his Shepherds talk as if they were at the university. Their speeches upon Love are downright dissertations; in which they cite MINOS, MARC-ANTONY, and other Deities and Heroes of ancient History. When THYRSIS would console his friend chagrined by his Mistress's refusal, he addresses him thus: "They say your Mistress

"is

" is as beautiful in perſon, as ſhe is
" hard of heart; but what ſhe is
" moſt celebrated for is her wit. If
" that is true,—which no doubt it
" is,—it follows, that ſhe knows
" herſelf; from knowing herſelf, ſhe
" knows her own worth; from know-
" ing her worth, ſhe will not conſent
" to her ruin; and from not conſent-
" ing to her ruin, ſhe cannot conſent
" to your deſires." *

In another place, an abſent Lover writes to his Miſtreſs,—" Though it
" ſeems to me I have the ſenſes of

* Mr. DE FLORIAN having inſerted, (in a note,) THYRSIS's ſpeech in *Spaniſh*, I have not ſcrupled to depart from his tranſlation, to give the ſenſe of the original better, or at leaſt, more logically. For, in the laſt link but one of the chain of deductions, Mr. F— ſays, " *qu' elle* ne veut pas *ſe perdre*;" and then draws the concluſion—" *et de cette* volonté, *qu' elle ne veut pas céder, &c.*" whereas the Spaniſh has it, " *no querer* " *perderſe, y de no querer perderſe viene el no querer* " *contentarte.*"

" ſeeing,

" ſeeing, hearing, and feeling, I am
" no more than a Phantom, formed
" by Love, and kept up by Hope."

Throughout the Work, the Sun never enlightens the world with a ſingle ray, but what he borrows from GALATEA's eyes.

Yet amidſt all its extravagances we meet with charming thoughts, and juſt ſentiments happily expreſſed; with ſituations truly intereſting; and the emotions, and ſtrugglings of the heart, admirably deſcribed. It is on theſe accounts I have tranſlated, or rather *imitated* CERVANTES's " GALATEA," in preference to any other of his works.

As it is very poſſible this Romance, under its preſent guiſe, may not meet with ſucceſs, I ought, in juſtice to CERVANTES, to ſpecify what particular alter-

alterations I have thought proper to make.

"GALATEA," in the original, is in ſix Books, and is not finiſhed; I have compreſſed thoſe ſix Books into three, and have added a fourth, to complete the Work. Scarcely any part of the Romance, as I have given it to the world, can be called a tranſlation; and the poetry yet leſs ſo, than any other part.

The ground work of the Story is CERVANTES's: but I have changed the incidents as often as I judged I could do ſo to advantage. I have added many new ſcenes in the firſt three books; and the fourth is entirely my own.

Fault will be found with me, perhaps, for the number of Epiſodes; and

and the paucity of adventures immediately relating to GALATEA:—In the original, the Episodes are more numerous, and GALATEA less frequently appears. MONTEMAYOR has committed the same fault in his "DIANA;" which, properly speaking, is not so much a distinct Story, as a collection of a great many.

As to the Combats, the Duels, which the Reader may be surprised to find in a pastoral Romance, they are a tribute CERVANTES paid to the humour of the times. I do not recollect a single Spanish Play or Romance, that has not fighting, of some kind or other, in it. That nation, one of the bravest of Europe,—and unquestionably the most impassioned,—hold no book in estimation that does not

treat

treat largely of Love, and War. But, were it otherwiſe, CERVANTES, ſurely, to whom ſo many extraordinary incidents happened in real life, might very well be pardoned for introducing a few in a Work of this nature.

I have but one word to add, in vindication of myſelf for having preſumed to criticiſe the Works of our Author. Beſides my having made the Spaniſh language my particular ſtudy, I have been aided in my judgement by a noble Spaniard, whoſe attachment to Letters, is equalled only by his love of his Country. I ſpeak of the Count *De* PILOS; who, like CERVANTES, is famed no leſs for his talents, than his misfortunes.

F I N I S.